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A3 [6nd] B6 could

associating a device ID with the device information;
selecting coupons according to the device ID;
encrypting coupon data corresponding to the selected coupons;
and,
transmitting the encrypted coupon data from the main server
system to the client system.

23. The method of claim 22 further including the step of:
decrypting the encrypted coupon data to recover the selected
coupons.

24. (allowed) A method of secure electronic coupon
distribution comprising the steps of:

associating a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) including a
promotional code with a coupon;
displaying the coupon to a user;
disabling access to the URL by the user; and,
invoking the URL with a browser to thereby enable the user to
redeem the coupon.

25. (allowed) The method of claim 24 wherein said invoking
step includes the substep of selecting the coupon by one of
clicking on the displayed coupon and clicking on an object
different than the coupon displayed to the user.

REMARKS

This is in full and timely response to the Office Action
of June 6, 2002. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.
The courtesy of several telephone discussions with the
Examiner is acknowledged with appreciation. In those
discussions, the undersigned representative expressed his
intention to submit claims distinguishing the former use of
"user information" or "user ID" or the like with the newly-
submitted replacement language of "device information" or
"device ID" or the like.

The rejections in the first Action on the merits were founded on the Emaginet article. Without necessarily agreeing with the rejections so founded, the amended claims set forth an invention not taught or suggested by Emaginet, as agreed upon by the Examiner in his review of these amendments to the claims when submitted informally.

The allowance of claims 24 and 25 is acknowledged with appreciation. By this response, the section 112 rejections of claims 3 and 17 for minor reasons are overcome.

Upon an informal review of these proposed changes, the Examiner expressed his view that the foregoing change would necessitate a new search and essentially requested that this amendment be submitted in normal fashion, rather than in an effort to gain an accelerated allowance. Thus, this amendment is filed, with some additional remarks.

It is a main feature of the amended claims that the method_collects device information from a device of a client system without identifying information sufficient to specifically identify the user, associating a device ID with the device information at the main server system, and then selecting and transmitting coupons according to the device ID based on the device information. The device may be, for example, a pc at the client system, and the device information may include previous coupon information. In the Applicant's novel system, it is not necessary to identify the user, or anything about the user, except optionally as in claim 2.

Amended independent claims 1 (method), 19 (system), and 22 (method) each develop this distinction. Emaginet, the cited publication, does not teach or suggest this main feature

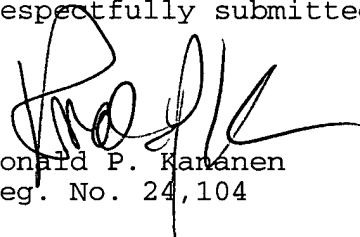
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of communicating by the device ID, rather than some user identification based on characteristics of the user. The Examiner appeared to recognize this distinction, when he suggested by Official Notice that cookies are well known so that to offer a cookie to a user for the formerly-claimed broad association would be obviousness. However, nowhere in the literature is it suggested that device information alone can and should be used to communicate in a coupon distribution system.

Claims dependent on the amended independent claims are also thus allowable for the same reasons as the parent claims, and in their own right when considered in combination with their base claims and any intervening claims.

Respectfully submitted,



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APPENDIX

Marked-up Version of the Claims

1. (amended) A method of operating an electronic coupon distribution system comprising the steps of:

collecting [user] device information from a [user] device of a client system [indicative of one or more demographic characteristics of the user] without obtaining information sufficient to specifically identify the user;

associating a [user] device ID with the [user] device information at a main server system;

selecting coupons according to the [user] device ID to thereby identify coupons appropriate for [the] a user based on the [user's demographic characteristics] device information; and,

transmitting the selected coupons from the main server system to the client system.

2. (amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said collecting step comprises the optional substep of:

obtaining from the remote user demographic characteristics including at least one of a postal zip code associated with the user and a state in which the user resides.

3. (amended) The method of claim 1 further including the step of:

associating the [user] device ID with [the] a remote client system.

4. (amended) The method of claim 3 further including the step of:

generating a printed version of one of the transmitted coupons at the remote client system [that includes the user ID].

5. (amended) The method of claim 3 further including the step of:

transmitting a request from the client system to the server system to perform said selecting step wherein the request includes
5 the [user] device ID.

6. (amended) The method of claim 5 wherein said request

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transmitting step includes the substep of:

5 automatically including the [user] device ID in the request
without any intervention by [the] a remote user of the client
system.

7. (amended) The method of claim 5 wherein said request
transmitting step occurs automatically without any intervention by
[the] a remote user.

8. (unamended) The method of claim 7 wherein said request
transmitting step occurs at predetermined intervals.

9. (unamended) The method of claim 3 wherein the remote
client system operates in accordance with an operating system
characterized by a graphical user interface (GUI), said method
further including the steps of:

displaying an icon visible to the user in a first display
state; and,

displaying the icon in a second display state different from
the first display state when a new coupon are available for the
user.

10. (unamended) The method of claim 9 wherein the second
display state is a flashing display state.

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11. (unamended) The method of claim 3 wherein said transmitting step includes the substeps of:

encrypting coupon data corresponding to the selected coupons at the server system in accordance with a server system encryption strategy; and,

sending the server-encrypted coupon data to the client system.

12. (unamended) The method of claim 11 further including the step of:

receiving the server-encrypted coupon data at the client system;

encrypting the server-encrypted coupon data in accordance with a client system encryption strategy to thereby generate doubly-encrypted coupon data; and,

storing the doubly-encrypted coupon data on the client system.

13. (unamended) The method of claim 12 further including the steps of:

decrypting the doubly-encrypted coupon data at the client system; and,

generating a printed version of one of the selected coupons at the remote client system.

14. (unamended) The method of claim 3 further comprising the steps of:

transmitting advertising data to the client system; and,

5 displaying at least a portion of the transmitted advertising data on a display portion of the remote client system.

15. (unamended) The method of claim 14 wherein the advertising data comprises a plurality of advertising impressions, and, wherein said displaying step comprises the substep of:

selecting one of the plurality of advertising impressions as a function of a selected subcategory of coupons available on the remote client system

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16. The method of claim 3 further comprising the steps of:
detecting events occurring at the remote client system;
storing the detected events in a user history file; and,
transmitting the user history file to the server system.

17. (amended) The method of claim 16 wherein said detecting step includes the substeps of:

determining when one of [the] a plurality of advertising impressions has been displayed on a display portion of the remote client system; and,

determining a sponsor identification of the advertising impression.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the storing step comprises the substep of:

encrypting the detected events to thereby generate encrypted user event information; and,

writing the encrypted user event information to the client system.

19. A coupon distribution system, comprising:

means for collecting [user] device information from a [user] device of a remote client system [indicative of one or more demographic characteristics of the user] without obtaining information sufficient to specifically identify the user;

means for associating a [user] device ID with the [user] device information at a main server system;

means for selecting coupons according to the [user] device ID to thereby identify coupons appropriate for [the] a user [based on the user's demographic characteristics]; and,

means for transmitting the selected coupons from the server system to the client system.

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20. The system of claim 19 wherein said collecting means includes means for obtaining from [the] a remote user demographic characteristics including at least one of a postal zip code associated with the user and a state in which the user resides.

21. The system of claim 20 further including means for associating the [user] device ID with the remote client system.

22. A method of secure electronic coupon distribution comprising the steps of:

collecting [user] device information from a [user of a client system] device on a network;

associating a [user] device ID with the [user] device information;

selecting coupons according to the [user] device ID;

encrypting coupon data corresponding to the selected coupons;
and,

transmitting the encrypted coupon data from the main server system to the client system.

24. The method of claim 22 further including the step of:
decrypting the encrypted coupon data to recover the selected coupons.

24. (allowed) A method of secure electronic coupon distribution comprising the steps of:

associating a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) including a promotional code with a coupon;

displaying the coupon to a user;

disabling access to the URL by the user; and,

invoking the URL with a browser to thereby enable the user to redeem the coupon.

25. (allowed) The method of claim 24 wherein said invoking step includes the substep of selecting the coupon by one of clicking on the displayed coupon and clicking on an object different than the coupon displayed to the user.